THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A draft Bill on Special Economic Zones has been formulated and circulatd to concerned departments for their comments.

New transit agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan

3878. SHRI B. J. PANDA :

MISS MABEL REBELLO :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether India, Iran and Afghanistan had met in Tehran to finalise a new transit agreement between the three countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present trade route between these three countries; and;

(d) the project that would be executed by India to help trade and transit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) and (b) India, Iran and Afghanistan held a trilateral meeting on 4 and 5 January 2003 at Tehran to discuss the development of transit and transport between the three countries, elimination of barriers and constraints, and providing safe, smooth, rapid and low-cost transportation. At the end of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Development and Construction of Transit and Transport Infrastructures in Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Delaram route was signed between the three countries aimed at improving access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

(c) At present the trade between the three countries is conducted through commercially available channels and routes including through Bandarabbas and Chabahar ports in Iran.

(d) As part of the development of Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Delaram route jointly with Iran and Afghanistan, India would be undertaking the construction of Zaranj-Delaram road segment in Afghanistan.